

NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

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LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS SAY EXPANDING BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR GUN PURCHASES CRITICAL TO PUBLIC AND OFFICER SAFETY, AS GUN FATALITIES ON THE RISE

GUNS LEADING CAUSE OF OFFICER LINE OF DUTY DEATHS, WITH OFFICER FIREARM FATALITIES UP 64% FROM SAME TIME LAST YEAR

Orlando, FL – Citing new data showing the increase in firearm fatalities among the general public and law enforcement, law enforcement officials representing nine national law enforcement leadership organizations, today stressed the importance of keeping guns out of dangerous hands by expanding background checks to all firearm purchases.

Under the umbrella of the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence (“the Partnership”), law enforcement executives from across the nation came together at a press conference during the annual conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to sound an alarm that gun deaths are increasing, and that as a matter of public safety, our nation must prioritize keeping guns out of dangerous hands.

Baltimore County, MD, Police Chief Jim Johnson, Chair of the Partnership, voiced grave concern that over the last decade gun deaths in the U.S. have risen from an average of 82 per day in 2002 to 91 per day in 2012, the last year for which data are available. He also expressed alarm that in 2014 gunfire is the leading cause of death for police officers killed in the line of duty. As of October 26, 2014, officer firearm fatalities rose 64 percent from the same time in 2013, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.

In 2012 and into 2013, ambushes were the leading cause of death for officers killed in the line of duty by guns. Ambushes remain a leading cause of officer firearm fatalities in 2014.

“Having served in both the military and for 17 years on the Orlando Police Department’s SWAT team, guns have always been a part of my professional life,” said Police Chief John Mina of the Orlando Police Department and IACP’s Host

Chief. "Law enforcement is not anti-gun. We have no problem with guns in responsible law-abiding hands. We do have a big problem with guns in the hands of bad guys." Chief Mina added, "There is no more vital issue of concern to law enforcement than dangerous individuals acquiring firearms. We, as a nation, must do everything we can to address this issue head on."

Federal law prohibits firearm possession by convicted felons, those under indictment, fugitives from justice, unlawful users of or those addicted to any controlled substance, illegal aliens, those adjudicated as a mental defective or committed to a mental institution, those dishonorably discharged from the military, or who have renounced U.S. citizenship, and those under a restraining order for, or convicted of a crime of domestic violence.

Currently, the federal Brady Law requires background checks for firearms purchased through federally licensed dealers, but background checks are not required for private sales. An individual can evade a check by purchasing a firearm at a gun show, or through an online ad, for example.

"Up to 40 percent of firearm transactions are private and do not require a check under federal law," said Chief Johnson. "That's like letting 40 percent of airline passengers board an airplane without going through airport security."

Wellesley, MA, Police Chief Terry M. Cunningham, who serves as 3rd Vice President of IACP, referenced U.S. Department of Justice statistics showing that between 1994, when the Brady Law was enacted, and 2010, background checks blocked more than 2 million prohibited purchases. "The Brady Law has already been incredibly successful," said Chief Cunningham, "By expanding background checks for all gun purchasers we will close loopholes and ensure we keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people and combat interstate gun trafficking."

"Law enforcement professionals and virtually all Americans support background checks for all gun purchases," said Dr. Cedric Alexander, DeKalb County, GA, Public Safety Director, who also serves as National President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE). "Ninety-two percent of the public supports background checks for all purchases, as do 88 percent of gun owners. It's time to make this a reality."

The National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence (www.lepartnership.org) is an alliance of the nation's law enforcement leadership organizations concerned about the unacceptable level of gun violence in the United States. The Partnership is working to address the pervasive nature of gun violence and its horrific impact on community and officer safety.

The Partnership includes:

[Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. \(CALEA\)](#)
[Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association \(HAPCOA\)](#)
[International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators \(IACLEA\)](#)
[International Association of Chiefs of Police \(IACP\)](#)
[Major Cities Chiefs Association \(MCCA\)](#)
[National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives \(NAWLEE\)](#)
[National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives \(NOBLE\)](#)
[Police Executive Research Forum \(PERF\)](#)
[Police Foundation \(PF\)](#)

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